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new universe



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FEB

SPITFIRE

And The TROUBLESHOOTERS!

AGAINST
THE POWER OF THE
STAR BRAND



new
universe

DESTRUCTION!

GERRY CONWAY & ROY THOMAS
SCRIPT

HERB TRIMPE
PENCILS

TONY DEZUNIGA
INKS

RICK PARKER
LETTERS

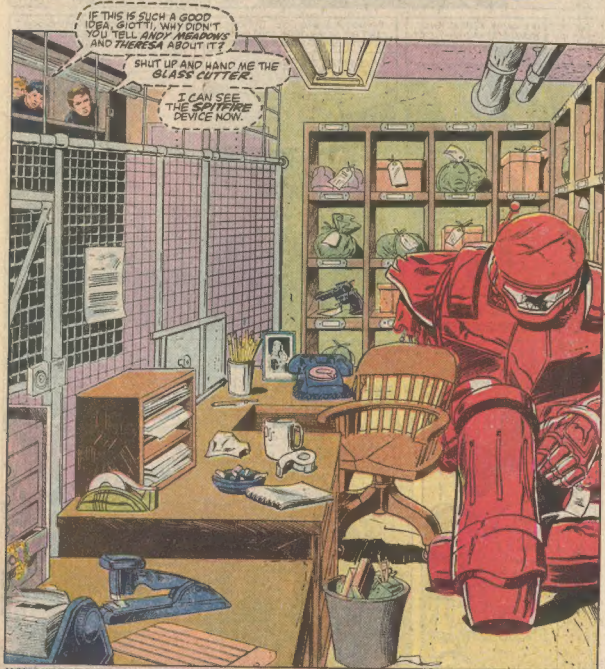
BOB SHAREN
COLORS

BOB HARRAS
EDITOR

JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

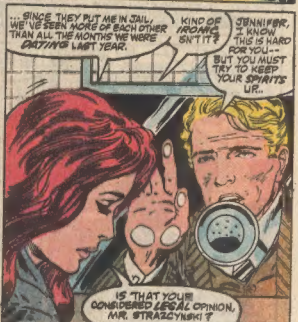
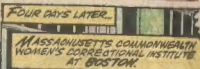
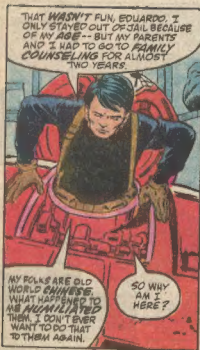
2:44 A.M., THE MORNING
OF NOVEMBER 13 TH.

THE DOWNTOWN WAREHOUSE THAT SERVES AS THE EVIDENCE AND
PROPERTY ROOM OF THE BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT.



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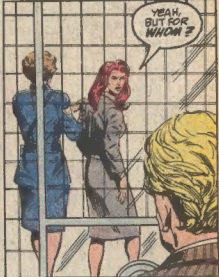
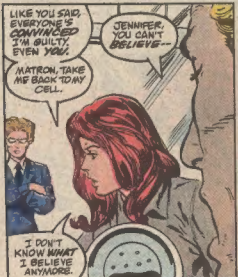
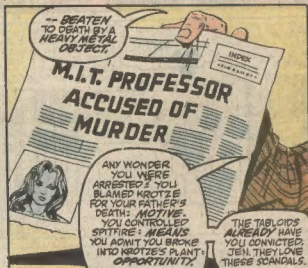
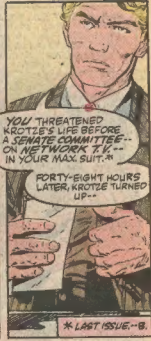






LISTEN, I'M BEING FRAMED FOR MURDER--FRITZ KROTZE'S MURDER--AND IN THE LAST MONTH YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO ARRANGE BAIL.

THAT MAN HAD MY FATHER KILLED! I DIDN'T KILL HIM--BUT HEAVEN HELP ME, I'M NOT SURE I'M SORRY HE'S DEAD.



LATER, ALONE IN HER CELL, JENNIFER SWENSON'S PROTECTIVE ARMOR OF ANGER FALLS AWAY...

I AM OUT OF MY MIND. BERNIE LOVES ME, AND ALL I DO IS RICK HIM. WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR ME TO ADMIT I NEED HELP?

WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR ME TO ADMIT I'M AFRAID?

I THOUGHT I KNEW BEST-- SO I IGNORED THE LAW AND DID WHAT I KNEW WAS "RIGHT."

FIRST I STOLE SPITFIRE AND DAD'S MOBILE LAB FROM KROTZE'S PLANT-- BECAUSE THEY WERE "MORALLY" MINE.

THEN I BROKE INTO KROTZE'S DATA BANK-- TO FIND PROOF HE DEALT WITH TERRORISTS.

EACH ACT WAS "MORALLY" DEFENSIBLE--BUT COMPLETELY ILLEGAL.

NOW I'M PAYING THE PRICE-- FACING TRIAL FOR SOMETHING I DIDN'T DO.

I'M SO AFRAID I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO SOMETHING...

HE'S RIGHT, I BROUGHT MYSELF TO THIS PLACE BY MY ARROGANCE-- MY SELF-WILL.

"SOMEbody PLEASE HELP ME..."

PITTSBURGH

THE MOON THAT SHINES OVER JENNY SWENSON'S CELL IN BOSTON ALSO SHINES OVER AN ALL-NIGHT CONVENIENCE STORE SOME HUNDREDS OF MILES SOUTH AND WEST.

"METAL-SUITED MURDERESS BEHIND BARS" --HMMMM.

I'LL TAKE ONE OF THESE PAPERS, TOO. YOU HAVE ANY GUIN T JUICYFRUIT, MAYBE?

WE GOT SPEAR-MINT.

NAH LET ME HAVE SOME TIC-TACS.

BOOM-BOOM.

THIS USED TO BE A PRETTY NICE NEIGHBORHOOD. MAYBE I SHOULD--

UH-UH, DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU THEY'RE JUST ROWDY PUNKS, BUT THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY'RE PLANNING TO HURT ANYONE. THOUGH THESE DAYS IT'S HARD TO TELL.

GIMMIE'A PACK'A BEEF JERKY!!

BOOM-BOOM!

HEY, THIS SUCKER TOLD MY QUARTER!



"JENNY SWENSEN"... SO THAT'S HER NAME. I DIDN'T KNOW WHO SHE WAS WHEN I MET HER THAT TIME IN **NEW HAMPSHIRE**. BUT I HAD A FEELING SOMETHING BAD MIGHT HAPPEN IF SHE WENT PUBLIC WITH HER ROBOT-SUIT.

I WARNED HER TO BE CAREFUL.. SHE DIDN'T LISTEN.

BUT ONE THING'S BEEN BOTHERING ME SINCE I FIRST HEARD ABOUT HER ARREST ON THE NEWS A MONTH AGO...

* STAR BRAND #2-808.



...WHEN WE MET, JENNY SWENSEN STRUCK ME AS A **NOT-HEAD**, BUT **NOT** AS A MURDERER. I WONDER IF I SHOULD TALK TO HER ABOUT-- HUH?

HEY...

LIKE THE SUIT.

FANCY.

SAW YOU USE A TWENTY BACK THERE.



YEAH. FIGURE YOU GOT CHANGE. MAYBE ANOTHER TWENTY.

LET SAY YOU GIVE US WHAT YOU GOT, AND WE DON'T KILL YOU.

IS THAT FAIR?



LISTEN, BACK OFF AND I WON'T HURT YOU...



BUT I WILL IF I HAVE TO.



DON'T GIVE ME NO BULL, OR YOU'LL GET A BACK FULLA BROKEN RIBS...

...HEY, MY STICK! WHAT'S GOIN ON!??



I WISH I HADN'T DONE THAT-- HATE TO LET ANYONE SEE ANY POWERS.

IT CRACKED! HOW!??

HEY, STU, LET'S GET OUTTA HERE.



YOU DO THAT. THIS DUDE IS CREEPY.

OH, WELL... EVEN IF THOSE CREEPS TELL WHAT HAPPENED, NOBODY'D EVER BELIEVE THEM-- I HOPE!



A FEW MONTHS AGO, I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED THEM MYSELF

JENNY MADE A REAL MISTAKE, GOING PUBLIC. PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT TO SOMETHING STRANGE AND FANTASTIC.



HECK, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT, AND I'VE GOT THE POWER.

ALL I CAN DO IS PLAY BY THE RULES.



EVEN IF I SOMETIMES THINK THERE ARE NO RULES FOR THE LIFE I'VE GOT NOW.

I HARDLY KNOW THE LADY, BUT I FEEL-- RESPONSIBLE. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE KEPT AN EYE ON HER, HELPED HER SOMEHOW.



THE LEAST I CAN DO IS SEE HOW SHE'S HOLDING UP IN PRISON.

I WONDER...

TWO DAYS LATER, A GRAY-SKY MORNING AT THE M.I.T. STUDENT DORM...

I'VE GOT A CLASS IN FORTY MINUTES. IS THIS NECESSARY?

WE THINK SO, MS. ROBERTS...



... AND FRANKLY, I'M SURPRISED YOU DON'T AGREE

DON'T YOU WANT TO HELP YOUR FRIEND CLEAR HERSELF?

FROM WHAT WE'VE LEARNED ON CAMPUS, YOU AND PROFESSOR SWENSEN WERE FAIRLY CLOSE.

JENNY SWENSEN ISN'T MY FRIEND. SHE'S MY TEACHER.



BESIDES, YOU'RE THE POLICE-- WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO CLEAR HER?

MAYBE I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH THE CASE AGAINST HER. MAYBE I THINK WE MOVED TOO QUICKLY. MY MOTIVES DON'T MATTER, THEREGA.

TELL ME ABOUT THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS KNOWN AS THE "TROUBLE-SHOOTERS."

WHY? WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF KIDS. WHAT'VE WE GOT TO DO WITH PROFESSOR SWENSEN?



YOU TELL ME.

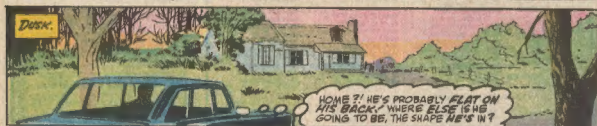
HE KNOWS. WE MUST KNOW WE HELPED JENNY BREAK INTO KROTZE'S PLANT. I CAN'T ADMIT ANYTHING.

I WON'T LET HER DRAG ME AND MY FRIENDS INTO JAIL WITH HER. I'M HALF CONVINCED SHE DID KILL KROTZE. SHE HATED HIM ENOUGH.

I'D HELP YOU IF I THOUGHT JENNY WAS INNOCENT.



BUT I'M NOT SURE





THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW ENOUGH TO CALL ME BY MY **CODE NAME**.

"**STEEL HAWK**"? THAT'S SO--**MELO-DRAMATIC**, DON'T YOU THINK?

I HAVE MUCH TO DO. GET TO THE **POINT**.



ALL RIGHT. **ENGLAND'S PRIME MINISTER** IS COMING TO **BOSTON** NEXT MONTH.

OF COURSE THERE'LL BE A SPECIAL RECEPTION HELD IN HER HONOR.

THE **CLUB** WANTS YOU TO SEE TO IT SHE ISN'T **ALIVE** FOR COFFEE AND CUPCAKES AFTERWARDS.

AND WHO IS TO BE **BLAMED** FOR THIS ASSASSINATION?



THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM. CERTAIN GROUPS WANT REVENGE FOR **ENGLAND'S** PARTICIPATION IN THE **LIBYAN CRISIS** LAST YEAR. THINGS HAVE BEEN MUCH TOO QUIET LATELY.

PEOPLE HAVE BECOME COMPLACENT AGAIN, AND WE CAN'T HAVE THAT. NOT WHEN **ARMS SALES** HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE **CLUB'S** MAIN SOURCES OF **INCOME**.

I KNOW. **INTERNATIONAL PARANOIA** IS GOOD FOR **BUSINESS**.

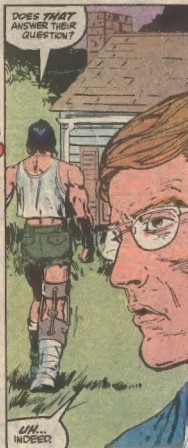
I WILL MAKE THE **ARRANGEMENTS**.



THEY'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR IT. NOW, I MUST--

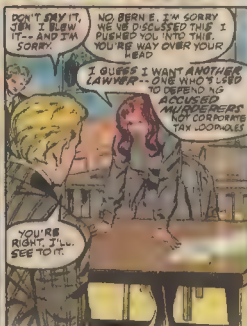
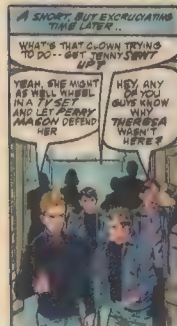
WAIT. THEY WILL **ALSO** WANT TO KNOW HOW MY **BROKEN LEG** IS RECOVERING FROM LAST MONTH'S BATTLE WITH THE **M.A.X. DEVICE**. WILL THEY NOT?

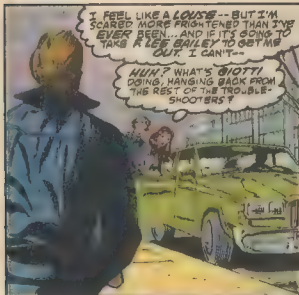
WELL... AS A **MATTER OF FACT...**



DOES THAT ANSWER THEIR QUESTION?

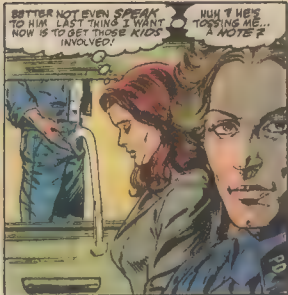
UH... INDEED.





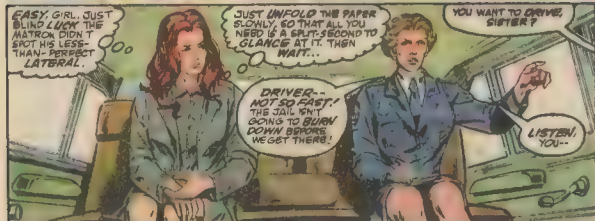
I FEEL LIKE A LOUSE-- BUT I'M SCARED MORE FRIGHTENED THAN I'VE EVER BEEN... AND IF IT'S GOING TO TAKE A LEE BAILEY TO GET ME OUT, I CAN'T--

HUH? WHAT'S GIOTTI DOING, HANGING BACK FROM THE REST OF THE TROUBLE-SHOOTERS?



BETTER NOT EVEN SPEAK TO HIM. LAST THING I WANT NOW IS TO GET THOSE KIDS INVOLVED!

HUH? HE'S TOSsing ME... A NOTE?



EASY, GIRL. JUST BLIND LUCK THE MATRON DIDN'T SPOT HIS LESS-THAN-PERFECT LATERAL.

JUST UNFOLD THE PAPER SLOWLY, SO THAT ALL YOU NEED IS A SPLIT-SECOND TO GLANCE AT IT. THEN WAIT...

YOU WANT TO DRIVE, SISTER?

DRIVER-- NOT SO FAST! THE JAIL ISN'T GOING TO BURN DOWN BEFORE WE GET THERE!

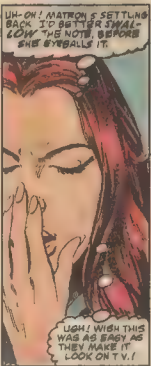
LISTEN, YOU--



WHO SAYS THERE ISN'T A GOD? NOW--

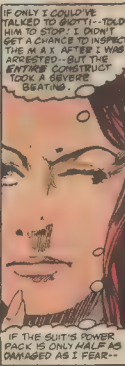
OH, NO!

THAT CAN ONLY MEAN THOSE CRAZY KIDS ARE GOING TO TRY SOMETHING REALLY DUMB-- LIKE MAYBE BREAKING ME OUT OF JAIL!



UH-OH! MATRON'S SETTLING BACK. I'D BETTER SWALLOW THE NOTE, BEFORE SHE EYEBALLS IT.

UGH! WISH THIS WAS AS EASY AS THEY MAKE IT LOOK ON T.V.!



IF ONLY I COULD'VE TALKED TO GIOTTI-- TOLD HIM TO STOP! I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO INSPECT THE MAX AFTER I WAS ARRESTED-- BUT THE ENTIRE CONSTRUCT TOOK A SEVERE BEATING.

IF THE SUIT'S POWER PACK IS ONLY HALF AS DAMAGED AS I FEAR--



--IT'LL EXPLODE ON OPTIMUM USE. GIOTTI WILL BE KILLED! AND IF THERE ARE PEOPLE AROUND-- GOOD LORD!

WHAT SHOULD I DO? IF I TELL THE COPS-- THE KIDS WILL BE ARRESTED. THEY'LL BE IMPLICATED IN THIS MURDER CASE. THEIR LIVES RUINED. LIKE MINE. NOW CAN'T STOP THEM? NOW?

SUCH THOUGHTS CONTINUE TO TORMENT JENNY SWENSEN, EVEN WHEN SHE'S BEEN RETURNED TO HER JAILERS.

IT'S ALL MY FAULT! IF I HADN'T PLACED MY OWN DESIRE FOR JUSTICE WITH KROTZE ABOVE THE LAW...

HEY, STOP WOOL-GATHERIN' SWENSEN! BIG BRIDGET WANTS TO SEE YOU!



Y'KNOW, YOU AIN'T EXACTLY THE FRIENDLY TYPE. WE DON'T LIKE THAT MUCH--SO'S ME AND A FEW OF THE GIRLS ARE GONNA DROP IN ON YOU TONIGHT. Y'KNOW A SOCIAL VISIT?

SURE. BRING YOUR PURSE.

WHY? YOU INTO LEATHER?

NO BUT YOU'LL NEED SOMETHING TO CARRY YOUR TEETH BACK TO YOUR CELL.

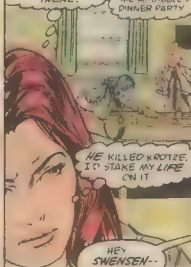


GREAT! NOW I'VE GOT BIG BRIDGET ON MY CASE! IN HERE--AND THE REST OF THE WORLD AFTER MY SCALP OUT THERE.

IF ONLY SOMEBODY COULD CATCH THAT ASSASSIN WHO ATTACKED ME AT DIBBLE'S DINNER PARTY

HE KILLED KROTZE. I'D STAKE MY LIFE ON IT.

HEY SWENSEN--



-- YOU GOT A VISITOR?

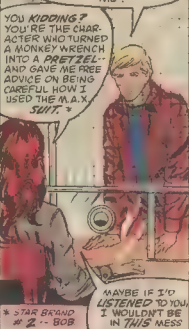


H'LO, JENNY REMEMBER ME?

YOU KIDDING? YOU'RE THE CHARACTER WHO TURNED A MONKEY WRENCH INTO A PRETZEL-- AND GAVE ME FREE ADVICE ON BEING CAREFUL HOW I USED THE M.A.X. SUIT.

* STAR BRAND # 2 -- BOB

MAYBE IF I'D LISTENED TO YOU, I WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS



WISH I COULD DISAGREE WITH YOU, PROF. IT'S NOT JUST A QUESTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG, YOU KNOW.

WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY OF RULES.



YOU BROKE THE RULES. AND THIS IS WHERE IT'S GOT YOU

OKAY, SO I'M A LOSER. WHAT'RE YOU WASTING YOUR TIME ON ME FOR. WHOEVER YOU ARE?



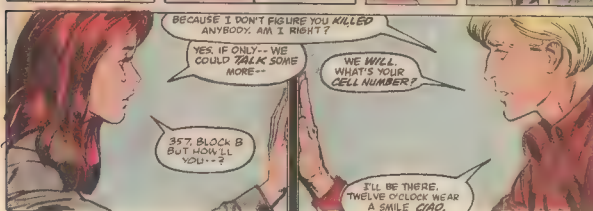
BECAUSE I DON'T FIGURE YOU KILLED ANYBODY. AM I RIGHT?

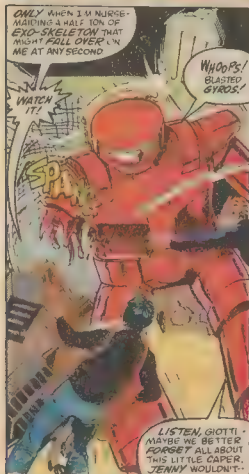
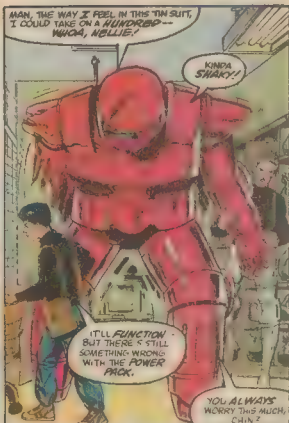
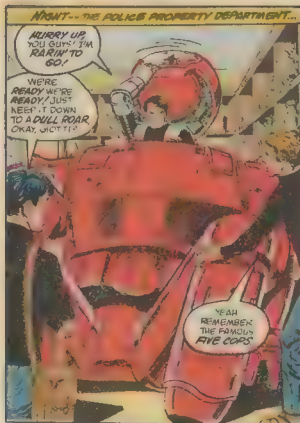
YES, IF ONLY-- WE COULD TALK SOME MORE--

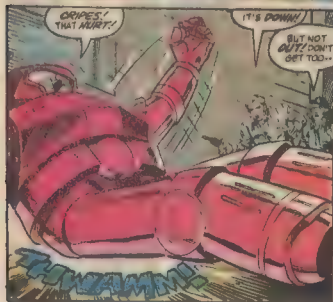
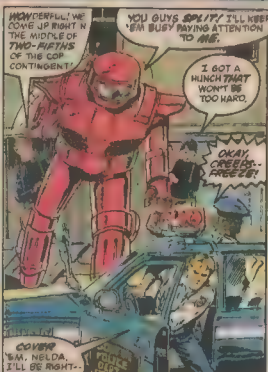
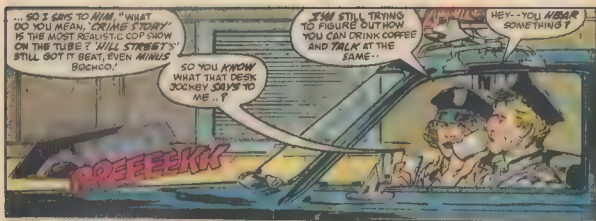
WE WILL. WHAT'S YOUR CELL NUMBER?

357, BLOCK B BUT HOW'LL YOU--?

I'LL BE THERE, TWELVE O'CLOCK WEAR A SMILE CIAO.



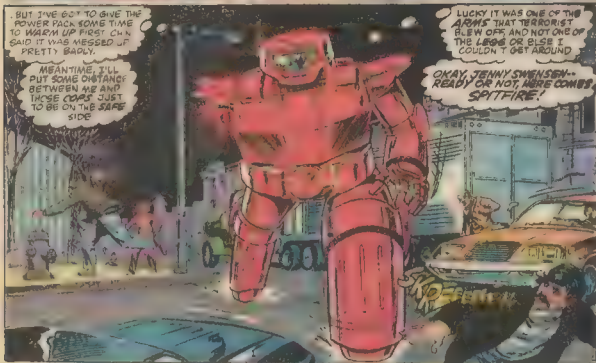






I'M GETTING SOME CONTROL OVER THIS THING... OR ELSE I'D HAVE **ADJUST** THOSE TWO INSTEAD OF JUST FLATTENING THEM.

BE A NICE TIME TO FLY SOME FRIENDLY SKIES...

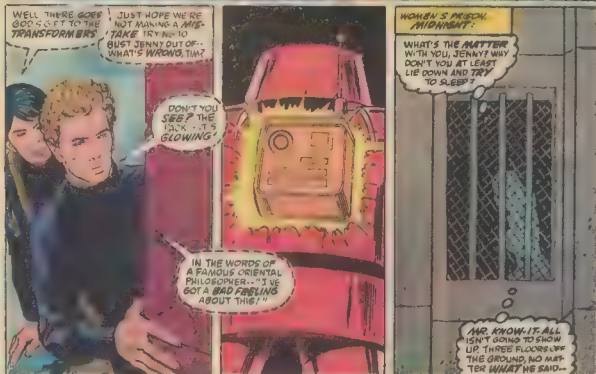


BUT I'VE GOT TO GIVE THE POWER PACK SOME TIME TO WARM UP FIRST. CHN SAID IT WAS MESSED UP PRETTY BADLY.

MEANTIME, I'LL PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND THOSE COPS JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.

LUCKY IT WAS ONE OF THE ARMS THAT TERRORIST BLEW OFF, AND NOT ONE OF THE LEGS. OR ELSE I COULDN'T GET AROUND.

OKAY, JENNY SWENSEN-- READY OR NOT, HERE COMES **SPITFIRE!**



WELL, THERE GOES GOD'S GIFT TO THE TRANSFORMERS.

JUST HOPE WE'RE NOT MAKING A MISTAKE TRYING TO BUST JENNY OUT OF-- WHAT'S WRONG, TIM?

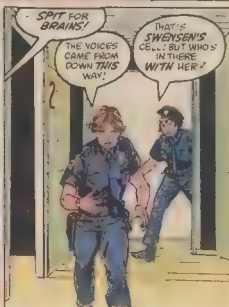
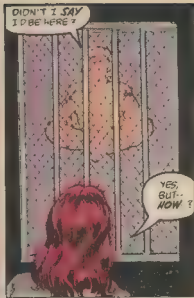
DON'T YOU SEE? THE JACK-- IT'S GLOWING.

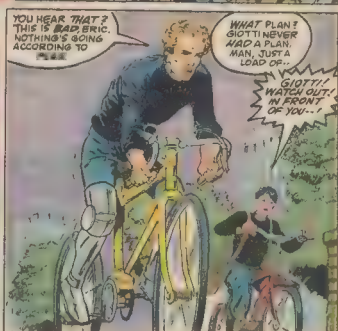
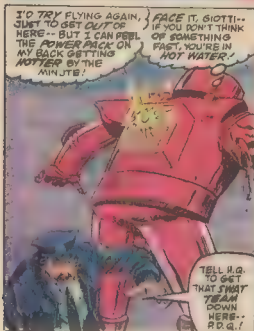
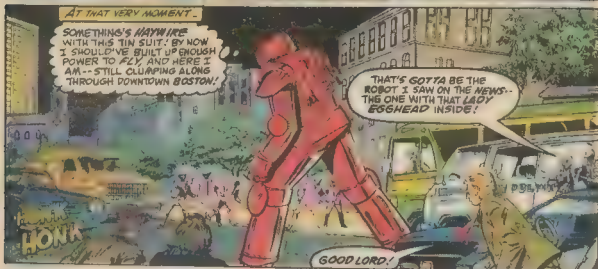
IN THE WORDS OF A FAMOUS ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHER... "I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!"

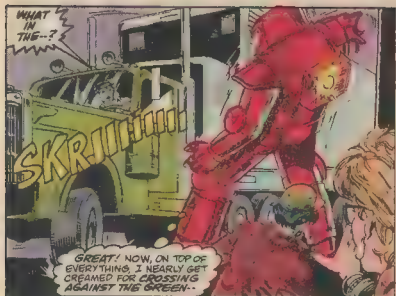
WOMEN'S PRISON, MIDNIGHT.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, JENNY? WHY DON'T YOU AT LEAST LIE DOWN AND TRY TO SLEEP?

MR. KNOW-IT-ALL ISN'T GOING TO SHOW UP, THREE FLOORS OFF THE GROUND, NO MATTER WHAT HE SAID--







WHAT
IN
THE--?

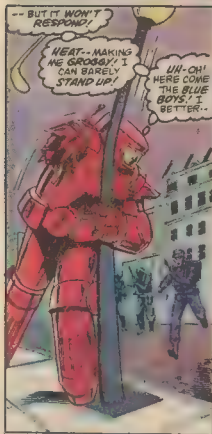
SKR

GREAT! NOW, ON TOP OF
EVERYTHING, I NEARLY GET
CREAMED FOR CROSSING
AGAINST THE GREEN--



-- AND MY BACK'S
STARTING TO FEEL
LIKE IT'S ON FIRE!

IF ONLY I
COULD TURN THE
SUIT'S POWER
SYSTEM OFF!



-- BUT IT WON'T
RESPOND!

HEAT-- MAKING
ME GROGGY! I
CAN BARELY
STAND UP!

UH-- OH!
HERE COME
THE BLUE
BOYS! I
BETTER--



YEEOWWP!



HEY! WHERE IN
BLAZES DID THAT
WALKING SARDINE--
CAN GO, ANYWAYS?

WHO COULD
SEE? IT ALL
HAPPENED SO
FAST-- LIKE
THE EARTH
JUST OPENED
UP AND SWAL-
LOWED IT
WHOLE!

BUT THAT
THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE--
SN'T IT?

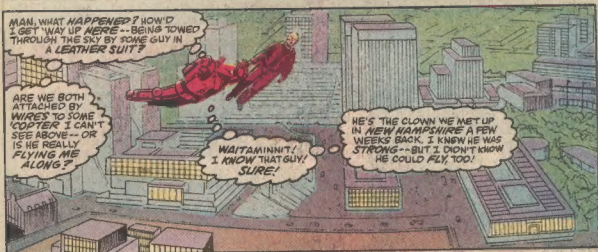


THEY COULDN'T
SEE, FROM THEIR
ANGLE-- BUT WE
COULD.

THAT BLUR OF ENERGY
JUST PLAIN SWOOPED
GOTT IT UP!

YEAH RIGHT
BUT WHAT
WAS IT?

AND-- WHERE'S
IT TAKING HIM?



MAN, WHAT HAPPENED? HOW'D I GET WAY UP HERE -- BEING TOWED THROUGH THE SKY BY SOME GUY IN A LEATHER SUIT?

ARE WE BOTH ATTACHED BY WIRES TO SOME COPTER I CAN'T SEE ABOVE -- OR IS HE REALLY FLYING ME ALONG?

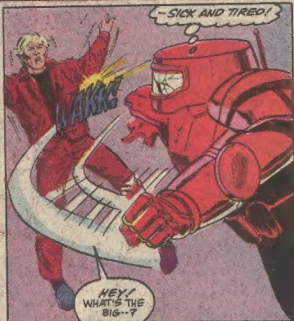
WAITAMINUT! I KNOW THAT GUY! SURE!

HE'S THE CLOWN WE MET UP IN NEW HAMPSHIRE A FEW WEEKS BACK. I KNOW HE WAS STRONG -- BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HE COULD FLY, TOO!



WELL, INSIDE M.A.X., I'M PRETTY STRONG MYSELF --

-- AND I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING HAULED AROUND LIKE A SACK OF POTATOES --



-- SICK AND TIRED!

HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG -- ?



YOU IDIOT! I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP YOU -- STOP YOU FROM GETTING YOUR BUTT IN THE WRINGER WITH THE POLICE --

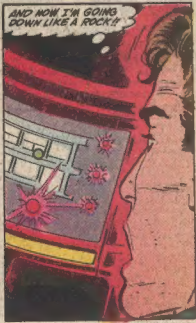


-- AND NOW YOU'RE COMMITTING SUICIDE ON ME?!

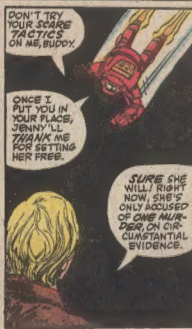
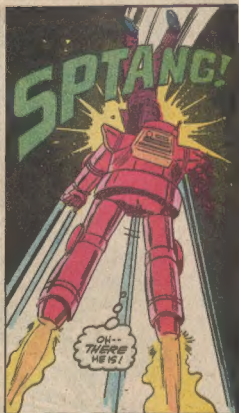
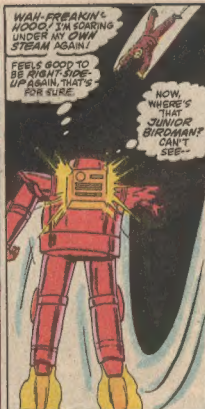
OH MY GOD!

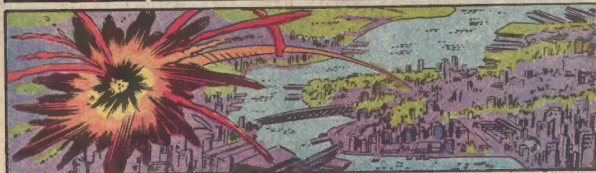
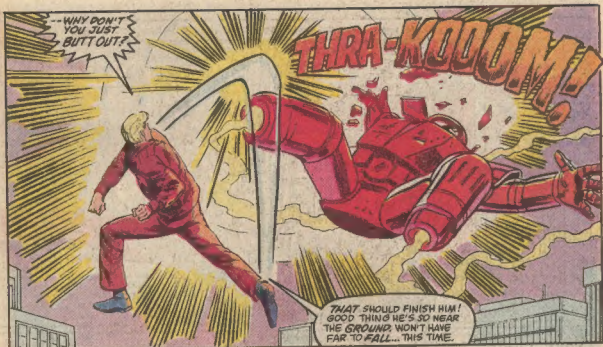
I WAS SO SPACED BY THE HEAT AND ALL -- I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING.

I CLOBBED MY ONE MEANS OF SUPPORT UP HERE --



AND NOW I'M GOING DOWN LIKE A ROCK!





AND THE NIGHT SKY SHINES WITH A FALSE PROMISE OF DAWN, ABOVE THE CITY OF BOSTON...

...INCLUDING THE WOMEN'S PRISON...

GIOTTI--? OH, PLEASE, LORD, DON'T LET IT BE...

...AND THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY...

...AND UPON THE SECLUDED DORM ROOFTOP TO WHICH KEN CONNELL TRANSPORTS THE FALLEN M.A.X. SUIT, WHILE THE NIGHT OWLS OF BOSTON ARE STILL RUBBING THEIR EYES.

GIOTTI-- OH MY LORD--!

HEY, NO PROBLEM, TERRY, I'M OKAY-- THOUGH THERE ISN'T ENOUGH LEFT OF SPIT-FIRE TO START A RESPECTABLE JUNKPILE.

ARE YOU SURE? TIM AND ERIC TOLD ME YOU'D VANISHED, AND I WAS SO WORRIED...

YOU WERE WORRIED? IF NOT FOR THIS GUY--

-- YOU'D BE DEAD MEAT.

THIS IS WHERE IT STOPS, PEOPLE. NO MORE FUTZING AROUND.

YOU'VE TREATED THIS ALL AS A GAME! SOME GAME! ONE PERSON DEAD-- A CITY THAT COULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED WHEN ARE YOU PEOPLE GOING TO LISTEN?

ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU'RE JUST LIABLE TO DO MORE HARM IN ONE CARELESS SECOND THAN YOU COULD DO GOOD IN A WHOLE LIFETIME. UNDERSTAND?

WE SURE DO, MAN.

DO YOU? I WONDER...

A SHORT TIME LATER...

...SO THAT'S THE STORY, PRO GOTTI'S OKAY, BUT SPITFIRE IS HISTORY. SORRY?

I'M... NOT SURE, IT WAS MY DAD'S LIFE-WORK, BUT AT LEAST I'M NOT AS WORRIED ABOUT MY TRIAL ANYMORE.

THE RULES ARE THERE FOR A REASON, YOU TAUGHT ME THAT... THOUGH I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME.

KEN.

GOOD NIGHT, KEN. AND... THANKS.

THE TRUE DAWN COMES AS JENNY SWENSEN CLOSES HER EYES, AT LAST, IN SLEEP.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SHE WAS ARRESTED, SHE SLEEPS... WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

**NEXT
ISSUE: THE TROUBLESHOOTER'S**

**NEXT TO
LAST STAND**